they were voted top group-those * TOP POP BEATLES *

You voted them the top INTERNATIONAL group. They are of course the FAB FOUR . . . and Fab's Assistant Editor Betty Hale tells you just what the Bee-oo-tiful Beatles mean to her . . . Over to Betty—

AS soon as Paul, John, George and Ringo came on the scene, I fell for their enthusiasm, honesty, exuberance and naturalness.

Paul has always been my favourite. For one thing, he is the most handsome. I think he has the most charming manners. To me, he is the friendliest, the most thoughtful and kindest. I admit he's a bit of a flirt, but what nice man isn't? But then, others of the FAB gang feel differently—and the arguments on who is the nicest Beatle get quite heated.

It's nearly two years since I first met Paul and he has changed very little. He was unknown outside Liverpool at the time. He wasn't a bighead then and he isn't now. As he once said in an interview: "If one of us gets to be a bighead, we'd soon bring him down a bit." I'm sure that's true.

Mind you, he is self-confident.

I always feel shy with him. He seems to notice very personal things. The last time I met him he came across and shook hands with me and said, "I hardly recognised you. You've had your hair cut." He looked at me pretty closely, not missing much. I was amazed he even knew me. I hadn't met him for nine months.

Without thinking, I was twisting a ring on my finger. Half seriously he asked, "Are you trying to tell me something?"

I felt such a fool when I blushed. But that's the effect Paul has on me. I find him terribly attractive.

If Paul hadn't been a Beatle, I'm sure that he would have made a success of whatever he had turned to. He'd be perfect as a screen actor, a television commentator and announcer. He would have been ideal in public relations, and he'd make a dream of a doctor. I think I'd swoon if he took my pulse. I'd vote for him if he put up for Parliament. I'm convinced he'd be an honest, hardworking M.P. He'd make the best ever ambassador and a good Prime Minister—well, that is if he had more experience of the ways governments work.

Imagine him as a husband and father. He'd be marvellous. He's so good tempered, tactful and gentle. Yet he has a wonderful sense of humour. The only thing that I hold very slightly against him is that he isn't mad about cats.

When he came to FAB before Christmas and dressed up in a cat costume for a photo session, I zipped him into the "skin" which he had particularly chosen.

"Are you fond of cats, then?" I asked, being a passionate cat lover myself and hoping desperately that this would be something we shared.

"No, not particularly," said Paul—and it's daft but I was disappointed.

Once I hired an Austin Princess and chauffeur to bring The Beatles to a photo session. The plan was (and I had promised Brian Epstein to do this) that the car would wait and then whip the boys to London Airport to catch an important plane as soon as the photographer had finished.

The session went pretty well. Afterwards, when I went to look for the limousine it was there all right, neatly parked at a meter—minus driver. So the photographer, Derek Berwin, and myself began to look for him.

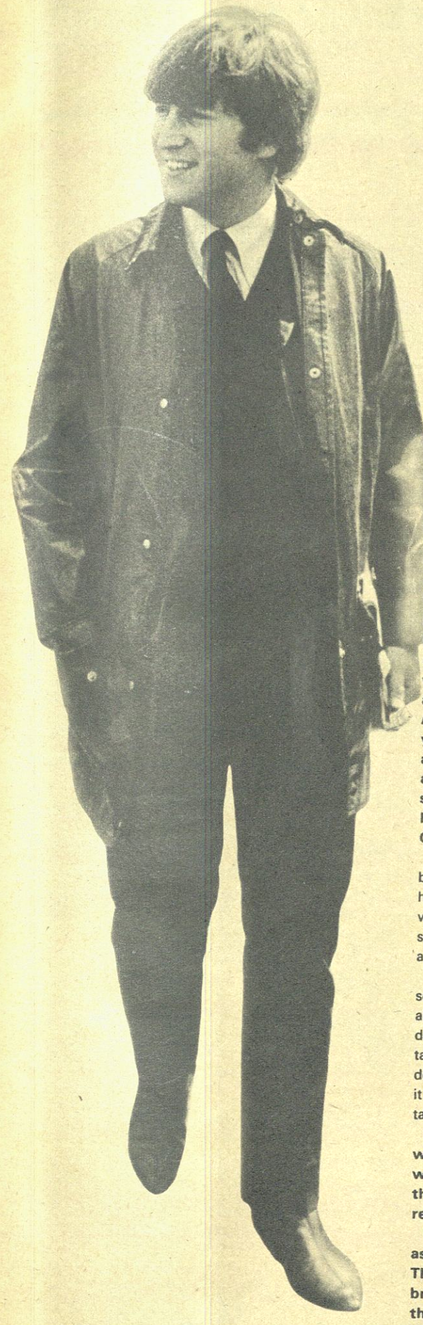
Time was very short and I was worried because I knew that Brian wasn't a person who would easily forgive such inefficiency. I became pretty frantic as the minutes ticked by.

The Beatles didn't seem particularly concerned. Well, it wasn't their responsibility.

Eventually Paul said, all innocently: "I gave the driver the morning off. He wanted to do some shopping." I could hardly believe my ears.

Derek had a small Volkswagen and we took all his junk out of it and piled The Beatles in. Missing his next assignment, Derek drove hot foot to the airport, only to find that the vital flight didn't exist.

"Well, you see," George said, "Eppy always tells us we have to be at places about an hour ahead of time because he knows we're always late."



There they were (the devils!) all calm and unruffled. I, at that moment, was eating my heart out back at Fleetway and Derek (at the airport) was exhausted with the mad drive and worry. That's Beatle mentality for you—so casual and taking life for granted. I may have suffered from it, but I admire it and I love them!

Personally, I never get tired of the old story Brian Epstein tells of Paul being late at the first important Beatles-Epstein meeting. George was asked to ring and find out where Paul was. Paul was in the bath and Brian was understandably angry.

"He'll be very late," he said.

But George said sweetly, "Yes, but he'll be very clean."

Oh, I do love those Beatles.

Paul is definitely the charming one. John I admire from a distance. I have to because I'm not on the same wavelength. I'd like to be able to talk to him but I never can find the right things to say, and I boggle at talking to him in the "In His Own Write" idiom.

I once heard him doing a Ray Charles bit (*Take These Chains From My Heart*) at a hotel in Bournemouth and congratulated him. I think he's got a great voice. But he just looked at me as if I was mad. Later on, as we had tea, he did his maniac act and I felt completely out of my depth. I like John best when he does Twist and Shout. The easy, abandoned way he puts it over absolutely gets me. John, maybe has the nicest Beatle smile of them all.

George is The Beatle who is the most sensitive. I remember when he was rather het up because the boys were being chased by fans so much that they had almost no peace. It was George who found it terribly worrying. He nearly snapped my head off when I spoke to him. At the time I was rather hurt. But when next we met and things were calmer, there he was back to his normal self again and charming as ever. He always seems to me the most *normal* Beatle, the one most likely to know how you and I are feeling. Ringo is calmer, John is almost a genius, Paul is a natural ambassador and can cope with even the most difficult situation. But George is just nice and normal. Perhaps that's why so many people like George best.

I love the way The Beatles say what they think and blow the consequences. They're not malicious. Just honest. And it came as a surprise to our humbuggy old world. Like when John said: "We all want to be rich so we can retire." No high flown talk about being artistes and all that stuff.

On Juke Box Jury I thought they were wonderful—so natural. Nothing seems to frighten them. They're always the same, just confident and normal. They don't show off. They're never shy. Ringo doesn't talk much. "That's how I'm built," he says. "I don't mind talking or smiling. It's just I don't do it very much. I haven't got a smiling face or a talking mouth."

I love the way The Beatles sing love songs with a broad grin. They say, "We practise what we call 'grinning at nothings.' One, two, three and we all grin at nothing." Maybe it is rehearsed but it is very effective.

No one has done so much for the World of Pop as these boys. They set a whole new standard. They've put Liverpool on the map and have brought in millions of dollars to Britain with their songs, discs, film and tours. I think they each deserve a knighthood—but I don't suppose they'll get one, but wouldn't it be great if some of those high-ups had the courage to make them "Sir" Beatles. That would be a knockout.

The Beatles would certainly have the courage to put things right if they were the top brass. They're not afraid of anything.

BETTY HALE